

What are ADA Compliant Signs and why do you need them?

As per a 2015 study by the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), an estimated 53 million Americans live with disability. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that out of the total number, almost 40 million civilian non-institutionalized Americans have disability. That's a whopping one in five adults in the continental United States who have some form of disability.

Accessibility issues faced by the disabled

Most disabled people encounter difficulty in walking or climbing stairs while the next major disability seems to be related to vision, memory and/or thinking, independent living and self-care.

In order to protect and safeguard the interests of disabled people in America, a civil right act, American's with Disability Act (ADA), was passed in 1990. The ADA has done well to help, protect and prevent discrimination against people with disabilities by working with institutions and the government on various compliance initiatives.

With the inception of the ADA, disabled persons saw ramp access to buildings, schools, supermarkets, stores, hospitals, hotels and places of public convenience. Aisles in supermarkets were mandated to be wider to accommodate wheelchairs and give disabled persons room and freedom to move about. This also extended to ensure that signage and sign boards were compliant with the needs of disabled people. This enabled people with disabilities to access places or information better, as well as to conduct their daily lives in a more efficient manner.

How does ADA Compliant signage help?

The purpose of ADA-compliant signage is not merely a regulatory need that business owners must fulfill. It truly helps customers and visitors find their way in an establishment of any size. Agnostic to the disability of a person, ADA compliant signs serve well to guide visitors and maneuver their way wherever they go. ADA compliant signs are easy to read in terms of size, text color, further, they not only help people with disability but also guide other visitors.

Types of ADA Compliant signs

ADA compliant signs are required in places that are unlikely to change location or structure very often. Essentially permanent rooms, establishments and spaces such as restrooms, rooms in

buildings and other permanent indoor locations and entrances to buildings come under ADA compliance. These signs also include safety signs such as exit signs, elevator signs and convenience signs for restrooms. Compliance involves specifications of size, height, color of text and background and the inclusion of tactile characters for the visually impaired. This could include pronounced or raised letters as well as Braille.

Conclusion

Since the ADA was passed over 25 years ago, its impact has been positively felt across America. All places of business, establishments and public spaces have seen a sea change in the way interior signage are placed and used. It has not only benefitted the disabled but also made it easy for all visitors, customers and members of the public to locate rooms, restrooms and other places within a building or common space.

Business owners and establishments have embraced this not just as a mere obligation to obtain occupancy certificates but also to enable them to leave a better impression on visitors. This creates a strong business case for commercial organizations, irrespective of size, to be ADA compliant with respect to signage. It is recommended to choose a professional signage company which understands the requirements prescribed by the ADA.

Image URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disabled_parking_permit

